

October 12, 2026

From: ORGANIZATION OF WOODLAND LAKE (OWL)

To: Brighton Township Planning Commission and Board of Trustees

**Subject: Formal Request to Delay Adoption of Proposed Data Center Ordinance
Pending Additional Environmental Protections**

Dear Planning Commission Members and Township Trustees:

On behalf of the Organization of Woodland Lake (OWL), we are writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed data center zoning ordinance scheduled for discussion at October 12, 2026, Planning Commission meeting.

We appreciate Brighton Township's efforts to proactively establish standards for this emerging land use. However, given the potential long-term environmental and infrastructure impacts associated with data center development, we believe the proposed ordinance requires additional review and stronger protections before moving forward.

OWL respectfully requests that the Township delay any recommendation for adoption or final approval of the ordinance until these concerns have been adequately addressed.

Our organization is committed to preserving Woodland Lake and protecting the surrounding watershed. We have seen firsthand how land use decisions can affect stormwater runoff, water quality, wetlands, and the long-term health of our lake. Once development occurs, some environmental impacts can be difficult, costly, or impossible to reverse.

We believe the Township has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to establish clear, enforceable standards before allowing this type of development.

Areas Requiring Additional Consideration

1. Watershed Protection and Water Quality

Woodland Lake is part of a connected watershed system. Development occurring beyond the lake's immediate shoreline can still affect water quality through stormwater runoff, sedimentation, groundwater movement, and changes in drainage patterns.

We request that the ordinance require a comprehensive, site-specific watershed impact assessment for any proposed data center with the potential to affect Woodland Lake or other water resources.

These assessments should evaluate both construction-related and long-term operational impacts, including potential cumulative effects from other development within the watershed.

2. Stormwater Management and Impervious Surfaces

Data centers may involve substantial building footprints, access roads, equipment areas, and other impervious surfaces.

Although the proposed ordinance addresses stormwater management, we believe more specific, measurable requirements are necessary.

We request standards that demonstrate development will not increase harmful runoff, erosion, sedimentation, or pollutant loading into nearby lakes, streams, and wetlands.

The Township should also consider cumulative stormwater impacts rather than evaluating each proposed development independently.

3. Water Consumption and Groundwater Protection

We recognize that the proposed ordinance includes restrictions on water-intensive cooling systems. However, these provisions alone do not fully address potential impacts on local water resources.

We request that applicants be required to disclose projected water consumption, identify water sources, and demonstrate that withdrawals or discharges will not adversely affect groundwater, wetlands, or surface waters.

Ongoing monitoring and reporting should be conditions of approval.

4. Independent Environmental Review and Ongoing Compliance

Environmental impact assessments should not rely solely on information prepared by or for the developer without independent verification.

We request that the Township retain qualified, independent environmental professionals to review these studies, with the associated costs paid by the applicant.

Additionally, the ordinance should establish enforceable monitoring requirements, reporting standards, and corrective measures if a facility fails to meet environmental conditions after becoming operational.

5. Location and Protection of Sensitive Natural Areas

Restricting data centers to industrially zoned property does not necessarily eliminate potential impacts on residential neighborhoods, wetlands, lakes, or other environmentally sensitive areas.

We request that the ordinance establish additional site-specific environmental protections, including appropriate setbacks and consideration of downstream watershed impacts.

6. Infrastructure Demands and Financial Responsibility

Data centers can require substantial electrical infrastructure, emergency services, and road improvements.

The Township should require applicants to demonstrate adequate infrastructure capacity and clearly establish responsibility for necessary improvements and ongoing costs.

Residents and taxpayers should not be expected to subsidize infrastructure required primarily to support private development.

OWL's Formal Requests

Before recommending or adopting the proposed data center ordinance, we respectfully request that Brighton Township:

1. **Delay advancement or adoption** until additional environmental safeguards have been evaluated and incorporated into the ordinance.
2. **Strengthen watershed and water quality protections**, including requirements for site-specific and cumulative environmental impact assessments.
3. **Establish measurable and enforceable stormwater, groundwater, and water-use standards**, with ongoing monitoring requirements.
4. **Require independent environmental review**, funded by applicants but conducted under Township oversight.
5. **Establish clear enforcement provisions**, including corrective actions and accountability for noncompliance.
6. **Clarify whether a specific data center development or location is currently under consideration** and, if so, provide information regarding its proposed location and potential environmental impacts.
7. **Provide additional opportunities for public review and comment** after revisions to the proposed ordinance have been made.

Request for Written Response

Given the potential long-term implications for Woodland Lake and the surrounding community, **OWL formally requests a written response from Brighton Township addressing the concerns and recommendations outlined in this letter.**

Specifically, we ask the Township to identify which environmental safeguards are currently addressed by the proposed ordinance, which recommendations may be incorporated into future revisions, and how remaining concerns will be evaluated before any recommendation for adoption or final approval.

We also request that this correspondence be included in the official public record for the October 12, 2026, Planning Commission meeting and any subsequent proceedings related to the proposed data center ordinance.

Closing

OWL recognizes that communities must adapt to changing technology and development needs. However, responsible growth requires thoughtful planning, meaningful public input, and environmental protections established before development occurs—not after problems arise.

Our position is not opposition to economic development. Rather, it is a request that Brighton Township ensure its zoning standards adequately protect the natural resources, water quality, and residential communities that make this Township a desirable place to live.

The decisions made today will establish the standards by which future data center developments are evaluated. We urge the Township to take the time necessary to get those standards right.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your written response and continued dialogue.

Sincerely,

Organization of Woodland Lake (OWL)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl Wasilewski".

Cheryl Wasilewski

Vice President

On behalf of the OWL Board of Directors